

NEWS RELEASE

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SUFFOLK POLICE OFFICERS RECEIVE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE LAW ENFORCEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

SUFFOLK, VA (May 4, 2018) Several Suffolk Police Officers were honored with 2018 Law Enforcement Public Service Awards by the United States Attorney's Office from the Eastern District of Virginia – Norfolk Division on May 2, 2018 at the Slover Library in Norfolk, Virginia. The purpose of the agency's Law Enforcement Public Service Awards is to honor and recognize those in the federal and state law enforcement community who have significantly contributed to the mission of the United States Attorney's Office in prosecuting violations of federal criminal law.

Suffolk Police Officer Jay Burton, Suffolk Police Officer James Brooks (now with Virginia State Police), and Suffolk Police Captain Cassandra Garvin were recognized for their work on the United States v. Jonathan David Strader, et al case. A total of 10 individuals were honored for the efforts with the case.

Mike Nigma and John Strader bonded while the two men were serving time for cocaine trafficking in the same North Carolina prison. Incarcerated some 3,000 miles from his home in California, Nigma, at first, had nothing. Strader took pity on him, burying Nigma supplies from Strader's own canteen account. In June 2015, after finishing his sentence, a grateful Nigma returned home to Oxford,

California and began supplying his former cellmate, Strader, with methamphetamine through overnight mail. By the time he was arrested on May 23, 2017, Nigma had supplied Strader with 10 pounds of methamphetamine. Strader and other members of Strader's drug organization sold the methamphetamine on the streets of South Hampton Roads. Strader carried a pistol and brandished it, as necessary, to collect drug debts. During this time, Nigma send another 10 pounds of methamphetamine through the mail to a separate group of drug dealers in Pinnacle, North Carolina.

Hearing there was a "new player in town", these investigators set out to identify "Fat Boy", the nickname by which Strader was known on the street. Using every investigative technique at their disposal – physical and electronic surveillance, witness interviews, search warrants, arrests and drug seizures – these investigators applied a full court press to the Strader drug organization and its California source of supply. On December 4, 2017, the Court sentenced Strader to 360 months' imprisonment. On November 6, 2017, the Court sentenced David Lupton, a street-level dealer for Strader, to 120 months' imprisonment. On February 20, 2018, the Court sentenced Nigma to 151 months' imprisonment. John Strader's brother Joey Strader, another street-level dealer, was sentenced to 175 months.

Suffolk Police Department Detective Rachelann Cain, assigned to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, was recognized for her work on the United States v. Lionel Williams case. A total of 8 individuals were honored for their efforts with the case.

Lionel Williams twice attempted to send money from Suffolk to people he believed were ISIS financiers, but who were actually FBI employees. He then began planning and gathering materials for a local terror attack that he hoped would end in his death. Instead, due to a tenacious investigation, led by FBI SA Maciek Kepka and TFO Rachelann Cain of the Suffolk Police Department, with support from numerous other members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force

(JTTF), Williams was arrested and prosecuted for his attempts to provide material support to a designated foreign-terrorist organization.

Williams' interest in ISIS began as early as 2014. On December 3, 2015, the day after the San Bernardino terrorist attack, he bought an AK-47 assault rifle online. He publicly declared his support for ISIS on a social media application in March 2016, described his hope that ISIS would take over the United States, and stated he would decapitate any law enforcement agents he caught surveilling him. After donating money to an individual he believed to be an ISIS financier – but was actually a persona adopted by an FBI Employee – Williams was told his donation had helped purchase a rocket-propelled grenade. He responded with an Arabic phrase meaning, “Praise be to Allah, and Allah is the Greatest.”

Later in 2016, Williams began discussing plans for a “martyrdom operation” with a woman living outside the United States, asked an FBI confidential source to send him specific types of AK-47 ammunition, again attempted to donate money to ISIS, and told an FBI employee that his plan was for a “local” operation. Williams was arrested and charged shortly thereafter. After his arrest in December of 2016 as he was finalizing plans to conduct a terroristic attack on the Suffolk Police Department, Williams told agents he supported ISIS and believed he was part of a “holy war.” Williams also told agents that if they had tried to arrest him at his home, there would have been a shootout. Asked what his elderly grandmother would have done in that situation, Williams' response was that “she knows when to duck.”

On December 20, 2017, Williams was sentenced to the statutory maximum of 20 years in prison. As part of his sentence, he is also subject to a lifetime term of supervised release. The stellar work by SA Kepka, TFO Cain and other members of the JTTF ensured that this would-be terrorist got the sentence he deserved rather than the martyrdom he was seeking.

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